

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-07 SSM-03 /091 W
-----141527Z 071644 /50

P R 141337Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3660
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE 249
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

I O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 1683

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI PINS PINT LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION APRIL 8-14

REF: BEIRUT 1572 (DTG 071536Z APR 77)

1. SUMMARY: THE SITUATION IN THE SOUTH STABILIZED
SOMEWHAT LAST WEEK. DEFENSE MINISTER BOUTROS VISITED
DAMASCUS. THE QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE REPORTEDLY DECIDED
TO CONSIDER A COMPROMISE INTERPRETATION OF THE CAIRO
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ACCORDS. THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ANNOUNCED NEW GOVERN-
MENT APPOINTMENTS AND A PAY RAISE FOR CIVIL SERVANTS.
MUHSIN SLIM HAS FORMED A NEW SHIA POLITICAL GROUP. TWO
CHARGES EXPLODED IN THE CHRISTIAN SUBURB OF AIN EL-RUMMANEH.
END SUMMARY.

2. SITUATION IN THE SOUTH.

A. THE SITUATION IN THE SOUTH STABILIZED SOMEWHAT LAST WEEK. BOTH SIDES ARE NOW REFRAINING FROM MAJOR GROUND OPERATIONS, ALTHOUGH ARTILLERY DUELS CONTINUE. THE CHRISTIANS RETAIN CONTROL OF MARJAYUN, ALTHOUGH FEDAYEEN ARE REPORTED IN THE SUBURBS. ACCORDING TO LEBANESE ARMY SOURCES, HIGH LEVEL CONTACTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LEBANESE ARMY AND THE PLO TO ARRANGE A POSSIBLE CEASE-FIRE.

B. BRIGADIER GENERAL VICTOR KHOURY, THE NEW COMMANDER OF THE LEBANESE ARMY, REMARKED PRIVATELY ON APRIL 11 THAT HE WOULD TRY TO FIELD A FORCE IN THE SOUTH WITHIN TWO WEEKS TO HELP KEEP THE PEACE, IF BOTH SIDES AGREED TO A CEASE-FIRE. KHOURY SAID HE MIGHT USE MEMBERS OF THE VANGUARDS (MIXED CHRISTIAN/MUSLIM MILITIA), NOW IN THE WESTERN BEKAA VALLEY, FOR THIS PURPOSE.

C. MEANWHILE, KFUR FRONT LEADERS ARE TELLING PEOPLE IN BEIRUT THAT 30 MEMBERS OF THE ABDULLAH FAMILY, A WEALTHY, PRO-ISRAELI, SHIA CLAN, WERE KILLED IN KHIAM AFTER PALESTINIANS AND LEFTISTS TOOK THE CITY. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY SOURCES, SIX MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY WERE KILLED, ALTHOUGH THESE SOURCES DID NOT KNOW WHETHER BY PALESTINIANS OR LEFTISTS. IN ADDITION, TWELVE CHRISTIANS WERE FOUND DEAD IN A NEARBY VILLAGE. WE DO NOT KNOW HOW OR WHEN THEY WERE KILLED.

3. BOUTROS VISITS DAMASCUS.

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FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTER FUAD BOUTROS VISITED DAMASCUS ON APRIL 13, WHERE HE MET WITH PRESIDENT ASAD AND OTHER OFFICIALS. BOUTROS TOLD REPORTERS AFTER RETURNING TO BEIRUT THAT "SYRIA IS VERY DETERMINED TO MAKE ALL NECESSARY EFFORTS TO PREVENT AN ESCALATION...OF THE SITUATION" (I.E., IN THE SOUTH). BOUTROS ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT THE REORGANIZATION OF THE LEBANESE ARMY WAS NOT LINKED TO THE APPLICATION OF THE CAIRO ACCORDS. IN THIS REGARD, ACCORDING TO AN NAHAR, ASAD INSISTED ON THE NEED TO REBUILD THE ARMY AND CIVIL SERVICE. BOUTROS AND ASAD ALSO AGREED ON A TIMETABLE FOR THE APPLICATION OF THE CAIRO ACCORDS AND THE RESUMPTION OF ACTIVITIES OF THE QUADRIPARTITE COMMITTEE, THE PAPER SAID.

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-----141526Z 071956 /50

P R 141337Z APR 77
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4. QUADRIpartite COMMITTEE MAY MEET.
AL ANWAR REPORTED ON APRIL 12 THAT MOHAMMAD AL KHOLI,
THE SYRIAN REPRESENTATIVE ON THE QUADRIpartite COMMITTEE,
HAD TOLD KFUR FRONT LEADERS THAT THE SECOND HALF OF APRIL
WOULD BE "DECISIVE" REGARDING SECURITY MATTERS IN LEBANON.
KHOLI ALSO REPORTEDLY REPEATED THAT THE SYRIANS WERE DETER-
MINED TO IMPLEMENT THE CAIRO ACCORDS. AN NAHAR REPORTED
THE SAME DAY THAT THE QUADRIpartite COMMITTEE PLANNED TO
DISCUSS AN AMENDMENT TO THE ACCORDS THAT MIGHT SERVE AS
A COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE PALESTINIAN AND LEBANESE INTER-
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PRETATIONS.

5. NEW GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS.
THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON APRIL 11 ANNOUNCED A NUMBER
OF NEW APPOINTMENTS, APPARENTLY DESIGNED TO PLACE SUPPORTERS

OF PRESIDENT SARKIS IN KEY SECURITY POSITIONS. (SEE BEIRUT 1655). INTER ALIA, LT. COL. SAMI KHATIB WILL REPLACE AHMED AL-HAJJ AS COMMANDER OF THE ARAB SECURITY FORCE (ASF), AND AL-HAJJ WILL REPLACE HISHAM SHAAR AS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES.

6. GOVERNMENT PAY RAISE.

THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON APRIL 11 ALSO APPROVED A 20 PERCENT PAY RAISE FOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, RETROACTIVE TO JANUARY 1, 1977, AND INCREASED THEIR MINIMUM WAGE TO LL 310 PER MONTH, ACCORDING TO AN ANNOUNCEMENT MADE BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE. PRIME MINISTER AL-HOSS TOLD REPORTERS THE RAISE WOULD COST THE STATE MORE THAN LL 100 MILLION. HE ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD SEND THE RAISE TO PARLIAMENT FOR ITS APPROVAL. THIS IS AN UNUSUAL MANEUVER, SINCE THE COUNCIL HAS EMERGENCY POWERS TO ISSUE DECREE-LAWS, AND IS APPARENTLY DESIGNED TO SECURE THE WIDEST POSSIBLE SUPPORT FOR THE RAISE.

7. NEW SHIA POLITICAL GROUP.

SHIA POLITICIAN MUHSIN SLIM, A PROMINENT LAWYER AND FORMER DEPUTY WITH CLOSE CONNECTIONS TO LEBANESE CHRISTIANS, RECENTLY FORMED A NEW POLITICAL ORGANIZATION, THE LOCAL PRESS REPORTED ON APRIL 12. CALLED THE UNION OF LEBANESE FORCES, IT IS DESIGNED IN PART TO SERVE AS A MORE CONSERVATIVE ALTERNATIVE TO THE POSITIONS ESPOUSED BY THE IMAM MUSA SADR, ACCORDING TO EMBASSY SOURCES. HOWEVER, SLIM ACTED PRIMARILY TO BUILD A VEHICLE WHICH COULD BRING HIM BACK TO POLITICAL PROMINENCE, THE SAME SOURCES SAID.

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8. UNEXPLAINED EXPLOSIONS.

AT 2030 HOURS ON APRIL 13, "TWO EXPLOSIVE CHARGES" WERE SET OFF IN THE CHRISTIAN SUBURB OF AIN EL-RUMMANEH, ACCORDING TO A COMMUNIQUE OF THE ASF. THERE WERE NO INJURIES. THE MOTIVES AND AUTHORS ARE UNKNOWN, BUT APRIL 13 MARKS THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAY WHEN FOUR CHRISTIANS WERE SHOT DOWN IN FRONT OF A CHURCH IN AIN EL-RUMMANEH, AN EVENT OFTEN CITED AS THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR IN LEBANON. PARKER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, MINISTERIAL VISITS, COMBAT OPERATIONS, EXPLOSIONS
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BEIRUT 1572
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2811650
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANESE SITUATION APRIL 8-14
TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, OVIP, LE, (BOUTROS, FOUAD)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7434b2a5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009